

## I CLAIM:

1           1. A toothbrush comprising:  
2           an inner handle part having an outer end;  
3           an outer handle part having an outer end remote from  
4 the inner handle part and an inner end juxtaposed with the inner-  
5 part outer end;  
6           bristles on the outer-part outer end; and  
7           a releasable joint between the inner-part outer end and  
8 the inner-part inner end joining the handle parts together and so  
9 constructed as to open and release when a lateral force is  
10 applied to the outer-part outer end that exceeds a predetermined  
11 safe brushing force.

1           2. The toothbrush defined in claim 1 wherein the joint  
2 is a ball-and-socket snap joint.

1           3. The toothbrush defined in claim 1, further  
2 comprising  
3           a tether between the handle parts, whereby the parts  
4 remain connected together by the tether even when the joint  
5 opens.

1                   4. The toothbrush defined in claim 3 wherein the  
2     tether is a flexible web extending between the outer-part inner  
3     end and the inner-part outer end.

1                   5. The toothbrush defined in claim 4 wherein the  
2     tether is molded unitarily with the inner part and outer part.